

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING
SUMMARY MINUTES
AUGUST 14, 2003 – COMFORT INN & SUITES, SANFORD

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Beuret – Maison et Jardin Restaurant
Pat Freeman – Altamonte Springs City Commission
Frank Fry – Holiday Inn Altamonte
Linda Marshall – SpringHill Suites Altamonte
M.M. “Red” McCullough – McCullough & Assoc.
Jay Sheppard – Best Western Marina Hotel
Dick Van Der Weide - Board of County Commissioners
Steve Wolfram – Council of Local Governments

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Helen Stairs – Helen Stairs Theatre

STAFF PRESENT:

Doug Barclay – Central Florida Sports Commission
Karen Brown - Seminole County CVB
Suzan Bunn – Seminole County CVB
Ann E. Colby – County Attorney’s Office
Laura Richeson – Bennett & Company
Fran Sullivan – Seminole County CVB
Kathryn Townsend – Seminole County CVB

GUESTS:

Jim Esch – Brandcomet
Andrea Farmer – Central Florida Zoo
Cindy Gennell
R.T. Hillery – City of Sanford
Don Nickerson – Super 8
Belinda Ortiz – CFHLA
Jamie Ross – Hilton Garden Inn Lake Mary
Bruce Skwarlo – Orlando Marriott Lake Mary
P.J. Temple – Comfort Inn & Suites
Jason Weeks – Altamonte Sports
Andrea Young – Comfort Inn & Suites

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present the meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by Frank Fry, TDC Chair. Introductions followed. Mr. Fry then made a belated presentation of the 2002 TDC Perfect Attendance Award to former member Cindy Gennell.

APPROVAL OF JULY 10, 2003 MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2003 meeting was made by Jay Sheppard. The motion was seconded by Bill Beuret and carried.

EVENT SPONSORSHIP REQUEST

Scottish Highland Games – Kathryn Townsend noted this is one of Seminole County’s signature events. This will be its sixth year in the County and third year at Central Winds Park in Winter Springs. Approximately 15,000 people and over \$900,000 in economic impact are projected. This organization has an excellent record for contract compliance. Staff recommends funding at the full \$25,000. Kathryn affirmed economic impact from last year’s event was above projection. Brief discussion followed. It was generally agreed to include pertinent

historical information relative to economic impact of past events in the application for funding. Bill Beuret suggested a policy to reduce funding for established events after initial start-up. Red McCullough suggested basing the policy on that of other counties. Staff will poll other counties and report to the TDC at next meeting. Linda Marshall expressed concern that an across-the-board policy might result in the loss of some events. Linda Marshall made a motion to approve the request for \$25,000. The motion was seconded by Red McCullough and carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Financial – Kathryn Townsend reported June revenue was 2% below projection. Year-to-date collections remain 2% below the same period last fiscal year and 21% below pre-9/11. Based on the County Commissioners' decision to place the convention center project on hold indefinitely, our 2003-2004 budget was restored to the 2002-2003 level, with approximately \$142,000 put back into the 2004-2005 budget.

Sales – Karen Brown's report included updates on the upcoming Hospitality Night scheduled for August 20, recent Meeting Incentive Travel Planner FAM on August 4, production of a meeting planner guide and plans for a sports-specific calendar on our website. E-Leads were accessed by 11 hotels and 1 attraction in July. Karen recently attended the Annual Governor's Conference in Jacksonville. In September a group consisting of three CVB staff and six members of the industry will call on corporate travel and meeting planners in Jacksonville, Miami and Tampa.

Central Florida Sports Commission – Doug Barclay updated upcoming and future events.

Inaugural Lake Monroe Canoe and Kayak Festival – This created event will be family-oriented and non-competitive, with demonstrations and interactive areas. Jay Sheppard emphasized directional signage is critical due to the Riverwalk construction project in Sanford. Event will be held at Sanford Marina on September 20, 2003.

Got Milk? – Approximately 25 more teams registered than last year. Event will be held at the Seminole Soccer Complex on August 16-17.

Teams 2003 – This premier sports conference and expo will be held in New Orleans, November 5-8. This event gives Seminole County a great opportunity to network with national governing bodies and event rights holders. Doug offered to display hotels' sales packets and brochures in our booth.

2004 USASA National Cup – The Sports Commission's bid for this amateur soccer event was successful. Seminole County hosted this event in 2001. The Annual General Meeting will be held concurrently. Meeting attendees will result in additional economic impact to the County.

PR & Marketing – Merrill Park in Altamonte Springs was granted the official Olympic rings by the US Olympic Committee. Bennett & Company worked closely with Jason Weeks of Altamonte Sports to generate media coverage. Some of Selling Communications' publications to reach the meetings market from the advertising and editorial side are being considered for next year's media buy. Information and high resolution images were sent to 2004 Official Visit Florida Vacation Guide, New Yorker Magazine, Group Tour Magazine, Success in Seminole Magazine, Florida Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus and Columbus Regional Airport Authority. Our new marketing plan includes new photography. Copies of news releases, media alerts and several advertising samples were circulated.

Executive Report – Suzan Bunn highlighted her report.

Consumer – Several new routes have been added at Orlando Sanford International. In conjunction with the National Business Aviation Association Convention at the Orlando Convention Center, Seminole County Economic Development and the CVB have been invited to participate in a promotional event with OSI to make contact with corporate travelers. **I Love Orlando Magazine** is interested in cooperative marketing with area hotels and attractions.

Meetings – A four-page color meetings newsletter is being developed to create awareness of Seminole County as a meetings destination. The Bureau is also working on a Meeting Planners Guide. At the recent Meeting Professional International World Education Conference in San Francisco, Suzan spent much of the time creating awareness of the availability of meeting space in our area. We will have a booth at the Professional Education Conference in February.

Sports – Suzan congratulated Altamonte Sports for capturing the Olympic Rings. The Bureau is working with Altamonte Sports to secure room nights when teams arrive for training. At the first Sports Marketing Task Force meeting, representatives of Central Florida Sports Commission, Altamonte Sports and directors from the various City and County Parks and Recreation Departments had an opportunity to network and discuss their upcoming events. This will be the basis for our online sports calendar. The task force will meet quarterly. A marketing piece for distribution to sports event organizers will be developed once the sports facilities inventory

update is complete. The recently created sports post card will be used for direct mail to sports events organizers. We are working with the Complete Soccer Academy to try to get some additional soccer training in the area.

Updates – Responses to the Marketing/PR RFP are due soon. The Media Conversion Study has been finalized and will be posted on the web site soon. Suzan would like input from the industry on how to utilize the study in next year's marketing plan. World Res, our online booking system, is up and running, with approximately 20 hotels participating. The first month did not produce record-breaking results, largely due to lack of promotion. This is one of the issues to be discussed at the Marketing Plan Subcommittee meeting next week. Based on County Commissioners' decision to put the convention center on indefinite hold, our 2003-2004 budget was restored to the 02-03 level, with remaining reserves added to the 04-05 budget. A brief question period followed.

OLD BUSINESS – Jay Sheppard inquired about the status of the TDC's recommendation to reduce zoo funding and a discussion followed. County Commissioners will review the zoo contract in October. Commissioner Dick Van Der Weide stated he expects funding to remain status quo based on the County Manager's recommendation, extensive lobbying on the zoo's behalf and in light of the fact that the convention center project will not move forward. Bill Beuret objected, citing a conflict with the TDC Mission Statement. Cindy Gennell sits on the zoo board and disagreed with reducing funding without determining how much support other zoos across the country receive from their Tourist Development Councils. There was disagreement about the term of the TDC's obligation to the zoo on the original ballot establishing the tourist tax. Ann Colby explained from a statutory standpoint the Legislature has determined a zoo as a tourism-related entity. Red McCullough stated he favored the reduction because of economic conditions. Andrea Farmer commented about plans for new exhibits and acquisition of adjacent land to become a trail head and connect with the Riverwalk in Sanford. She stressed that people who visit the zoo eat in area restaurants, visit shops in town and cruise on the Rivership Romance. This synergy of our natural attractions benefits everyone including hotels. Groundbreaking for the new education building will take place before the end of the year.

NEW BUSINESS – None

GENERAL DISCUSSION/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Jason Weeks expressed thanks to Suzan Bunn for her help with USA Softball. He commended Bennett & Company for excellent PR work. Kathryn Townsend announced the 5K Run on Saturday, August 16. This charity event is part of the Extreme Challenge Urban Run in Sanford this weekend and will benefit Canine Companions.

HOSPITALITY UPDATE – Linda Marshall inquired where teams stayed for the Got Milk? event. Doug Barclay responded as part of the funding process questionnaires were distributed and the Sports Commission expects to have the information within a few days. Bruce Skwarlo stated in comparison with last year, significantly fewer rooms were booked at the Lake Mary Marriott for Got Milk? More hotels submitted competitive rates this year. Red McCullough questioned the accuracy of information the CVB receives from daily calls to hotels relative to available rooms and rates. He stated desk clerks are reporting rack rates and fictitious occupancy. Brief discussion followed.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION – September 11, 2003 – SpringHill Suites, Sanford.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 1:20 p.m.